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Conclusion

The issues raised in the preceding chapters develop a new agenda for research on political citizenship in the context of a globalizing world. In this conclusion, we draw together the arguments developed under two main headings: access to political citizenship and the exercise of political citizenship. These are not the only ways in which the arguments could be thematized but this arrangement perhaps most perspicuously summarizes our central concern with the conditions of political citizenship.

Political Citizenship and the Politics of Membership

Amongst the most significant empirical developments within the context of the global transformations within which states are universally, but differentially, situated have been two forms of state-adaption to which Chapters Six and Seven drew attention. The first is regionalization as a response to economic globalization and common security concerns. In the case of the European Union since the 1994 Treaty of Maastricht, this has also involved the emergence of a new form of supranational citizenship, albeit one that is hardly post-national in character, being dependent on citizenship of one of the member states. The second, which is more directly our concern here, is the transformations of state membership regimes which we can see under two aspects. First, these transformations can be seen as responses to conditions of state development under globalization and, relatedly, maintenance of ties amongst a transnationally dispersed national community in which a transformed perception of expatriate citizens and of diasporas more generally finds expression in permitting dual nationality, instituting expatriate voting rights and a range of other governmental techniques. Second, at least in liberal-democratic states, these transformations can be related not only to economic concerns but also to concerns of immigrant integration that find expression not only in permitting practices of dual nationality but also in practices of partial (or, more rarely, full) incorporation into the political community of the state for immigrants. In respect of these developments, we want to highlight three points.

The first concerns the ways in which these shifts in membership regimes in response to transnational migration have reanimated – and give expression to – fundamental debates about how to conceive of citizenship and, at the most abstract level, a distinction between accounts based on justice and on ‘good-of-citizenship’ as developed in Chapter Four. Our point here is not

that such abstract accounts directly inform the political activity of citizens but rather than they represent distinct but reasonable pictures of citizenship in terms of which different policies concerning, for example, the duty of immigrants to integrate and what such a duty may entail can be clarified so as to aid critical reflection on the politics of citizenship both within states and across states with different traditions of citizenship. As we note in Chapter Four, these abstract accounts may have different implications for the terms on which access to citizenship is made available and what such citizenship is understood to entail.

The second point we want to highlight returns us to the political struggle between the politics of civic rights and the politics of human rights addressed in Chapter Five, and while our focus was on the UK example, such a struggle can be seen as manifesting itself in different ways across western liberal democracies. That such a struggle occurs and is framed in terms of the relations of citizens and aliens may seem hardly surprising but it points to a significant shift in the practical self-understanding of states. Matthew Gibney has pointed out that the Westphalian state understands itself as 'at base a particularistic agent, defined by a responsibility to privilege the interest and concerns of its own citizens' (Gibney 2004: 1997). Put more fully:

Above all else ... the state is fundamentally an answer to the question of who is responsible to whom in the modern world: states are responsible to their own citizens. The survival of the state as an entity over time rests, moreover, on its ability to portray itself convincingly as an answer to such a question. As a consequence, the claims of outsiders are assessed by states, including liberal democratic ones, through a logic that deprecates the interests and needs of outsiders – a logic that is exceedingly sensitive to the potential damage to its own authority involved in forcing its citizens to incur costs for the sake of strangers. Modern states are highly resistant to the moral claims of outsiders. (2004: 211)

The grounds of this view lie in tracking the historical development of theoretical reflections on the political legitimacy of the state from an initial focus on the security of its subjects to a position where modern states 'now also claim to be agents for the protection of the ways of life of the human community over which they rule (national agents) and actors in pursuit of their citizens' economic welfare (economic agents)', these

changes being related to a broader transformation in the relation between state and citizen: 'the modern state's role as democratic agent' such that 'increasingly the authority of the modern state has come to rest upon the claim that its actions and goals reflect not only the needs of its citizenry but also their wishes as expressed through a representative democratic process' (Gibney 2004: 211). This view of the state is not wholly incompatible with much of the transformation of state membership regimes insofar as these transformations are driven by state interests; however, it does not seem to account adequately for the increasing susceptibility of state's actions to the judgments of international human rights organizations and transnational human rights advocacy networks – and the relationship of the embedding of human rights norms with discourses of state legitimation to transformations of citizenship. In other words, it helps explain why there is a resistance to a politics of human rights and why that is framed in terms of the state's prioritization of its own citizens, but it does not explain why, or how, a politics of human rights has become a powerful presence in democratic states. The changing membership regimes of states and internal arguments over the relationship of civic rights and human rights framed in terms of the relationship between citizens and aliens indicate that the state has become a site of struggle between national and cosmopolitan norms, where the politics of citizenship is one of the central manifestations of this contest. One reason that this point matters is that our scepticism towards global citizenship (as expressed in Chapter Eight) should not be seen as a scepticism towards cosmopolitanism *per se*; rather, it should be seen as identifying a different potential path for cosmopolitanism in which it is not a regime of global democracy but the gradual cosmopolitanization of the state that offers a promising route forwards.

Within this politics of citizenship, the issue of access to citizenship helps to highlight the point that basic issues such as family life are integrally tied to questions of citizenship as a state's different policies on family reunion migration represent the mediation of the human right to a family life, national traditions of citizenship and pragmatic politics, while raising the relation of gender to this politics of citizenship. The point here is that, given the gendered character of migration, issues such as family reunion rights for migrants are also issues concerning the differential gender access to citizenship of a state which is not one's own or, to put it another way, the gendering of the politics of citizenship.

It is, then, striking that – at a time in which the politics of citizenship has become a central issue for states and under conditions in which

democracy has gone global as an ideal and, increasingly, as a practice of state governance – that the exercise of political citizenship in what we may call the founding states of democratic governance appears to be in decline in respect of formal (voting, membership of parties) politics and relatively stagnant in respect of informal (protest) politics.

Disappointment, Hope and Fatalism

It is a constitutive feature of political life that engaging in politics, investing oneself in the difficult and often somewhat tortuous process of political activity, entails inevitable exposure to the possibility of disappointment in the form of a failure to achieve one's desired ends and, typically, not just exposure to this possibility but the painfully recurrent actuality of disappointment. (Arguably modern conditions of pluralism have intensified this feature of political life.) Yet within the phenomenon of political disappointment, we can distinguish two rather different registers. In the first, our disappointment consists in the fact that we have lost a political battle on an issue we care about enough to invest ourselves in political activity, our opponents have triumphed and their policies, not ours, will shape our shared political lives for the time being – but typically within this register of disappointment we retain the sense that the contest was a contest, that it could have gone differently or might go differently next time. In the second, our disappointment consists in the perception that the contest was not a contest at all, that our investment of time, energy and identity was not simply lost but also wasted. It is, of course, the case that if a group loses and keeps losing that the former will shade into the latter, but the point remains that while, in the first case, exposure to political disappointment is necessarily bound up with political hope; in the second case, disappointment inclines to political fatalism which breeds either resignation and withdrawal or recourse to methods of bringing about change outside of the political process, most obviously violence. There are a variety of factors that can breed such fatalism, as Chapter One noted: the perception of the venality of politicians, the perception of the state as captured by special interests, the perception that the state is powerless in the face of global forces and the perception that global agencies of governance are themselves either ineffective or too far removed from citizens of states to be subject to political control. In a political culture in which some or all of these perceptions are widespread, cynical disengagement is unsurprising. By distancing himself or herself from politics, by entertaining no important hopes of politics, the citizen minimizes their vulnerability to disappointment and the same point can be seen in the case of actors who restrict their political activity to the use

of low-cost media of political engagement such as signing online petitions. But what can counter such perceptions and support a political culture in which disappointment is bound to hope rather than fatalism?

Two different ways in which fatalistic disappointment can be contested are to expose the falsity of the epistemic content of such perceptions and to design practices that explicitly undermine the basis of such a fatalistic view. In regard to the first, we can note that our discussion of national citizenship in global context (Chapter Seven) points to the misleading simplifications at work in the 'declinist' thesis that globalization undermines citizenship. Our account reasserts the salience of citizenship as an explanatory factor in accounting for some aspects of the differential manifestations and impacts of globalization in terms of diverse traditions of citizenship and as a valuable institution that has taken on new forms through the transnationalization of membership regimes (Chapter Six) and is practised in new contexts (for example, transnational civic activism). But the very disparity between our account and the popular acceptance of the declinist thesis raises vital political issues about the relationship between the academy, the media, political parties and the public concerning the formation and transformation of public perceptions. How have popular images of globalization been formed? Whose interests are served by such declinist images? What are the most effective ways of contesting such public perceptions?

The second way to contest political fatalism is to reshape our political institutions in ways that address the problem of fatalism. One effective way to do so is to design institutions of political engagement which address fatalism by clearly linking direct political participation with consequential political decision making (the topic we address in Chapter Two). At their best, such institutions not only address the problem of fatalism but work to reskill participants in respect of the demands of collective decision making; it is not intuitively implausible that the relatively widespread use of such institutions may help to support the conditions for the reemergence of active political engagement, not least in protest movements, but significant research on this relationship remains to be done (as Chapter Three concludes). Recourse to democratic innovations, though highly valuable, is unlikely to fully address public dissatisfaction with our practices of representative government but it may have significant lessons to provide in terms of the differential mixes of incentives, opportunities and participatory roles that different innovations provide and their varying success in engaging citizens, particularly citizens from the most disengaged strata of society. Beyond this, however, what is urgently needed

is research concerning citizens' perceptions and understandings of politics across its various contexts from the local to the global – and, further, of their understanding of the meaning and value of citizenship in national, transnational and supranational contexts. We may also reasonably ask in this context how different understandings of citizenship impact on the exercise of political citizenship within and beyond the state – and how those understandings may vary across different contexts of political agency. In distinguishing justice-based accounts of citizenship and those based on 'good of citizenship' (Chapter Four), and showing the different (if broadly complementary) implications of these accounts, we provide an abstract theoretical framework in which to analyse different traditions of citizenship and civic reasoning, while the theoretical reflections on democratic goods (Chapter Two) and social movements (Chapter Three) provide bases for reflecting on the institutional and non-institutional dimensions of political citizenship and the relationship between the two.

A final question emerges from the thematic organization of these concluding reflections: Is there a relationship between the destabilization of a settled popular view of citizenship and the problems of declining or stagnant political participation by citizens? And if so, how does the current significance of the politics of citizenship relate to the limited ways and degree to which political citizenship is currently exercised? As always, further research across a range of issues is needed if political reflections are to meet the challenges posed by political reality, but we hope in this volume to have laid out *one* important agenda for such research and the problems which it needs to engage.